

REMARKS

Claims 8 - 12 and new claims 16 - 24 are pending in the foregoing application. Reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

The claims are rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Wouters et al, U.S. Patent No. 5,547,298, and additionally under 35 USC 103(a) over the remaining cited references.

The amendments to claims 8-12 are meant to clarify the invention. Applicants clearly intended the tape holding case 443 to be the outer case of a cassette. Support for this is found throughout the specification, for example on page 4 stating "when the tape holding case is recieved in said tape printing apparatus" and particularly on page 16, lines 1-1-2, which state "the pin 401 is located at the lower left corner of the cassette 443".

The Examiner states that claims 8-11 are unpatentable over the Wouters et al. reference, indicating that on the left hand side of Figure 1 therein is shown a cassette, generally designated by reference C (see also column 5, line 36). On the right hand side of Figure 1 of Wouters et al., there is a package, generally designated by reference P, including a carton and spool contents (see also column 6, lines 21-25. The carton appears to be used to transport the spool contents, and for use the spool contents are transferred to the cassette. This is illustrated by the arrows I and II in Figure 1, wherein the spool is transferred, and also by column 1 lines 10 - 16 of Wouters et al.. As is probably best exemplified by Figure 2, the cartons include means (numerals 41 and 63) on the top and bottom thereof, which interact with each other when a plurality of cartons are stacked vertically.

The undersigned believes there is an essential difference between the present invention, as defined by amended claim 8 and new claim 16, and the Wouters et al. reference. The provision of the means for attaching the cases in Wouters et al. is provided on cartons which are used to transport the spooling tapes, and not on the cassettes themselves, as required by amended claim 8 and new claim 16. Thus, the present invention provides a simplified technique for stacking cassettes, whereas Wouters et al. provides a technique for stacking cartons, which may contain cassettes.

The Examiner has also rejected claims 8-11 based on Matsuda et al., in combination with Falconieri et al. The only relevant teaching of Matsuda et al. appears to be that a series of identical tape cases are stacked on one another. This is illustrated for example in Figures 4-7. There is no disclosure in Matsuda et al. that these tapes are provided with any means for

interacting with each other when stacked. They appear to be maintained in position by a "cassette table" generally designated by reference numeral 12. The Examiner has alleged that it would nevertheless be obvious to provide these cassettes with means for attaching to each other, in view of Figures 5-7 of Falconieri et al. However, Figures 5-7 of Falconieri et al. merely show means for attaching two parts together, wherein complementary parts are provided on each part. There is no suggestion in Falconieri et al. that each part is identical - in fact, figures 5 and 6 of Falconri show the two pieces are not identical. There is no suggestion that multiple, i.e., more than two, parts may be attached.

Additionally, there is no motivation for the skilled person to seek to alter the arrangement of Matsuda et al., since Matsuda et al. appears to provide a satisfactory arrangement for stacking identical cassettes. Even if the person skilled in the art, for no apparent reason, did introduce the teachings of Figures 5-7 of Falconieri into Matsuda, there would not be provided all of the features of amended claim 8 since there would no longer be provided means for attaching identically shaped cases.

Nozaki does not remedy the deficiencies of Falconieri and Matsuda.

It is believed the foregoing arguments and the amendments made herein overcome the cited references, and reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested. Should the Examiner have any questions, or if there are minor corrections which could be made to place the application in condition for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the number listed below.

There are no fees additional to the extension of time co-filed herewith. However, should additional fees or credits be deemed necessary, please charge the same to the Pennie & Edmonds LLP Deposit Account No. 16-1150.

Respectfully submitted,

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For


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APPENDIX A

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

On page 1, before line 1 of text, amend the paragraph relating to priority data to read as follows.

--This application is a divisional of [pending] U.S. Serial No. 657,264, filed September 7, 2000, now U.S. Pat. No. 6,332,725, which is a divisional of 09/180,502 filed November 12, 1998, now U.S. Pat. No. 6,152,623, which is a 371 of PCT/EP97/05065, filed September 16, 1997.--

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

8(amended). A [tape holding case (443) housing] cassette comprising a supply (32) of image receiving tape (24), [the tape holding case comprising] and a case having means thereon for attaching the [tape holding case (443)] cassette to an identically shaped [tape holding case] cassette.

9. [A tape holding case (443) according to claim] The cassette of claim 8, wherein the means enables more than two identically shaped tape holding cases to be attached.

10. [A tape holding case (443) according to claim] The cassette of claim 8, wherein the means for attaching comprises a recess (404) on a first wall (473) of the [casing of the tape holding] case [(443)] and a corresponding upstanding portion (403) on a second wall (472) of the [casing of said tape holding] case [(443)], wherein the first wall (473) and the second wall (472) are on opposite sides of the [casing of said tape holding] case [(443)].

11(amended). [A tape holding case (443)] The cassette according to claim 8, wherein the recess (404) and the upstanding portion (403) have a generally rectangular cross section.

12(amended). A tape printer (2) in combination with a [tape holding case according to] cassette of claim 8, wherein the tape printer (2) has a zone for receiving the [tape holding]

case [(2)] , wherein the zone comprises elements interacting with the means of the [tape holding] case [(2)] for attaching it to a second [tape holding case] case.